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By Electronic Mail and ECFS

March 25, 2009

Marlene H. Dortch
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Suite TW-A325
Washington, DC 20554

RE: Comments – *Report on Rural Broadband Strategy*, GN Docket No. 09-29

Dear Ms. Dortch,

This letter is in response to the Federal Communications Commission's ("Commission's") Public Notice released on March 10, 2009, seeking comment on Congress's directive in the 2008 Farm Bill that the Chairman of the Commission develop, in consultation with the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, a comprehensive rural broadband strategy, which strategy is also to be guided by Congress's recent requirement in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 that the Commission develop a comprehensive national broadband plan. In addition, this letter is a follow-up to Commissioner Adelstein's recent request for comments regarding intergovernmental coordination and the development of a comprehensive broadband strategy.

During a March 13, 2009, conference call with the Telecommunications Subcommittee of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, Commissioner Adelstein expressed an interest in how states can coordinate with federal agencies in meeting the rural broadband challenge.

Attached is a White Paper that was recently prepared by the Massachusetts Broadband Institute on behalf of a group of state broadband authorities.¹ While the Department recognizes that the Commission is quite familiar with state commissions, state broadband authorities are more recent creations and this White Paper will provide the Commission with a helpful introduction to them. In addition, this paper demonstrates a variety of state broadband strategies and discusses how states are uniquely positioned to coordinate with federal agencies to bring broadband to our nation's unserved citizens.

¹ This White Paper is also available at <http://www.masstech.org/broadband/docs/BroadbandInvestmentMultiStatePaper.pdf> (last accessed March 25, 2009).

A critical first step in intergovernmental coordination that advances broadband is to ensure that states have access to all the broadband availability data under the Commission's charge. This will greatly aid state mapping efforts and help states target exactly where broadband investments need to be made.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts stands ready to work with the Commission on a comprehensive broadband strategy. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

/s/

Sharon E. Gillett, Commissioner
Dept. of Telecommunications and Cable

Attachment

cc: Chairman Copps
Commissioner Adelstein
Commissioner McDowell
Scott Deutchman
Carolyn Conyers
Katie Yocum
Scott Bergmann
Nicholas Alexander
Brigid Calamis